

Toms River Regional awarded stimulus money

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More than \$6.1 million in federal stimulus money is going to the Toms River Regional School District, part of almost \$32.3 million in money going to Ocean County schools from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, it was announced Monday.

The announcement was made by Rep. John H. Adler, D-N.J., at Hooper Avenue Elementary School, on the district's first day following spring break. The Hoop, as the school is familiarly known, was chosen not only because of its central location, but also because it has solar panels on its roof, a testament to the school's forward thinking, Adler said.

The pronouncement of the receipt of federal money comes a week after NJBiz, a weekly business journal, announced the Toms River Regional School District as an NJBiz Green Leadership Award finalist in the category of alternative-energy use. The award recognizes businesses in the state for environmental achievements and initiatives, with finalists selected by an independent panel of professionals in the industry.

"The school has done a lot of progressive things, and we (the federal government) wants to reward doing such a good job," Adler said.

Students in first, third and fourth grade greeted the congressman in the school's gym. Many of them held up hand-drawn posters supporting Adler, their school and the state of New Jersey.

"I know the school district will spend the money well, helping kids, helping teachers and helping to build a better future for Toms River," Adler said.

Michael J. Ritacco, superintendent of schools, said the district will look into what, if any, provisions are attached to the money before making any decisions as to where to spend it.

"We have to be really careful about spending the money. We don't want to create a burden in the end" by being unable to continue a program started by stimulus funds, Ritacco said.

Other school districts in the county receiving stimulus funds are Barnegat, \$900,232; Bay Head, \$23,505; Beach Haven, \$13,303; Berkeley, \$618,197; Brick, \$3,322,790; Central Regional, \$652,147; Eagleswood, \$38,139; Island Heights, \$24,049; Jackson, \$2,249,913; Lacey, \$1,388,579; Lakehurst, \$206,974; Lakewood, \$10,709,535; Lavallette, \$46,356; Little Egg Harbor, \$672,986; Long Beach Island Consolidated, \$68,173; Manchester, \$957,560; Mantoloking, \$828; Ocean County Vocational, \$267,577; Ocean Gate, \$74,425; Ocean

Township (Waretown), \$262,087; Pinelands, \$569,290; Point Pleasant Beach, \$195,673; Seaside Heights, \$152,400; Seaside Park, \$27,640; Southern Regional, \$698,014; Stafford, \$764,823; and Tuckerton, \$109,578.

ON THE WEB: Visit www.recovery.gov for more information about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and www.trschools.com for more information about the Toms River Regional School District.